

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

AUGUST 10, 1848.

Submitted, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. YULEE made the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. No. 348.]

*The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the petition of Joseph K. Boyd, one of the petty officers of the ketch Intrepid, under the command of Captain Stephen Decatur, at the time of the destruction of the frigate Philadelphia, in the harbor of Tripoli, on the night of the 16th February, 1804, report:*

That the subject of a reward to the officers and crew of the ketch Intrepid, for their gallant and meritorious exploit, has been frequently under the consideration of Congress. The principal difficulty seems to have been in the adjustment of a proper mode of distribution. This committee, being of opinion that the only proper guide for the distribution of the sum intended to be awarded is that furnished by the prize act, which has governed in all similar cases, have adopted the rule of that act.

The sum proposed to be distributed is one hundred thousand dollars, which appears to have been regarded in former reports as being one-half the estimated value of the frigate. The committee are of opinion that, if the allowance is granted at all, it should be by an act covering the whole claim and closing the subject. They report a bill accordingly.

*Statement of facts in relation to the recapture of the frigate Philadelphia, in the harbor of Tripoli, on the 16th of February, 1804, furnished to the committee on behalf of the petitioner.*

During our memorable contentions for the freedom of navigation of the Mediterranean, and after the war with Tripoli had commenced, a small squadron, under the command of Commodore Preble, (the U. S. frigate Constitution being the flag ship,) was despatched, by our government, for the purpose of carrying on hostilities against that despotic power, and bring it to terms.

The United States frigate Philadelphia, one of the squadron, commanded by Captain Bainbridge, when cruising off the harbor of Tripoli, struck upon the rocks lying in the immediate vicinity of the fortifications, and was stranded. Finding it impossible, after using every exertion, to get off his vessel, or to resist the overwhelming force of the enemy, Captain Bainbridge was forced to surrender; and his officers and men were made prisoners, and removed to the dungeons of the city fortifications. The frigate, subsequently, was got off the rocks by the Tripolitans, having sustained but little injury, and was moored by them within pistol shot of the Tripolitan navy, manned and made ready for sea. More than one hundred pieces of heavy cannon were mounted on board the different vessels of the Tripolitans, manned by upwards of one thousand seamen; and the whole lay within the immediate protection of formidable land batteries, consisting of one hundred and fifteen pieces of heavy artillery, and within sight of a force of twenty thousand troops, stationed in the city and its vicinity.

The loss of this fine frigate and her noble crew was most seriously felt, and proved a great detriment to the American squadron, in carrying on efficient operations against an active enemy.

Under these circumstances, so annoying to our squadron, the then Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, conceived the bold idea of recapturing the Philadelphia with his vessel, the U. S. schooner Enterprise, which he then commanded, and communicated his plan of operation to Commodore Preble.

The commodore was fully impressed with the importance of so daring an act, approved the plan, and accepted the offer of Lieutenant Decatur's services. But, sensible that success must depend on the secrecy, celerity, and gallantry of its execution, and that an attempt to bring out the frigate, if captured, would, in all probability, be attended with too great hazard and loss of life, gave peremptory orders to set fire, after capture, to every accessible part of the frigate; and, after "blowing out her bottom," to abandon her.

In compliance with this permission and his orders, Lieutenant Decatur manned a small ketch, of about sixty tons, (which he had recently captured, and named by Commodore Preble the "Intrepid,") with seventy officers and men, volunteers from his own vessel, and sailed from Syracuse, where the American squadron lay, on the 3d February, 1804.

He had an unusually stormy passage, and arrived on the 16th following off the coast. After perfecting all his arrangements, he ran, after dark, into the harbor of Tripoli, disguising his movements as much as possible, to deceive the enemy, by whom he was observed and suspected; and, at about 10, p. m., lay his vessel boldly alongside the Philadelphia, boarded and carried her, sword in hand, in the most gallant style, after a severe, though short, conflict on the decks of the frigate, in which upwards of twenty of the enemy were slain, and the rest driven below or overboard.

The capture was made with such gallant daring, and with so many concurring favoring circumstances, that, in the opinion of

many, the frigate could have been easily carried out of the harbor, and again added to the American squadron. But the peremptory orders of Commodore Preble forbade such an attempt; and, after deliberately setting her on fire, as directed in his instructions, and remaining on board "until the fire had communicated to the rigging and tops," Decatur abandoned her to her fate, bringing off his whole crew, under a heavy fire from the batteries and shipping, without the loss of a man, (having but one slightly wounded,) and rejoined the American squadron.

The details of this heroic transaction are given at large in House Document No. 27, twenty-second Congress, first session, containing the memorials of Mrs. Susan Decatur and Mrs. Mary Preble, accompanied by reports of Commodore E. Preble, and the then Lieutenants Stephen Decatur and Charles Stewart and others.

The value of the Philadelphia was estimated at over two hundred thousand dollars; hence every committee, who heretofore acted upon this subject, have uniformly awarded one hundred thousand dollars, as a remuneration to the captors.

*A table of the distribution of \$100,000 to the captors of the frigate Philadelphia, showing the amount which each individual would be entitled to according to the prize act, the bill of 1834, the bill of 1836, and by the British order in council of March 19, 1834.*

No. of persons.	Station.	Share of each person by the prize act.	Share of each person by the bill of 1834.	Share of each person by the bill of 1836.	Share of each person by the British order in council.
1	Commander of the squadron.....	\$5,000	\$5,000 00	\$5,000 00	\$6,250 00
1	Captain of the Intrepid.....	10,000	31,412 42	15,000 00	15,625 00
3	Lieutenants, each.....	3,333 $\frac{1}{3}$	4,188 32	6,389 10	5,562 70
1	Surgeon.....	2,000	2,991 65	4,259 40	3,090 39
1	Boatswain.....	2,000	2,991 65	2,555 64	3,090 39
1	Gunner.....	2,000	2,991 65	2,555 64	3,090 39
2	Master's mates, each.....	2,000	2,991 65	1,916 73	2,225 08
6	Midshipmen, each.....	1,944 4-9	1,357 32	1,703 76	1,236 15
2	Boatswain's mates, each.....	1,944 4-9	1,357 32	971 14	1,236 15
1	Steward.....	1,944 4-9	1,357 32	920 03	988 92
4	Quartermasters, each.....	1,136 4-11	1,006 81	817 80	1,286 15
1	Pilot.....	1,136 4-11	1,006 81	817 80	1,236 15
1	Sergeant of marines.....	1,136 4-11	1,006 81	945 59	1,236 15
1	Corporal of marines.....	1,136 4-11	1,006 81	681 50	988 92
4	Quarter-gunners.....	1,136 4-11	1,006 81	766 69	618 08
42	Seamen and marines.....	833 $\frac{1}{4}$	304 13	613 35	618 08